

EHEDG in Eastern Europe

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Since the foundation of EHEDG in 1989, the guidelines of EHEDG have been accepted and applied by the food industry, equipment manufacturers, consultants, test institutes and authorities in all countries in western Europe. Although in 1989 EHEDG was a small organisation, supported by just a few, be it major, players in the food and equipment industry, currently EHEDG has Regional Sections in many western European countries, including Belgium, France, Germany, Italy, Netherlands, Portugal, Scandinavia, Spain and Switzerland. Some of these Sections exist for quite some time, others have been founded recently and are still under development. The guidelines of EHEDG are also appreciated outside Europe, resulting in a section in Japan and Thailand and the set up of an EHEDG test facility in the USA. Until recently, the only country in eastern Europe with a Regional EHEDG Section, was Poland.

Although EHEDG does not make nor intends to make standards, many standards on the design of food processing equipment have been based to a significant extent on the guidelines developed by EHEDG. Often, members of EHEDG Subgroups were also members of the standardisation committees in Europe and elsewhere and helped developing the standards. Not so long ago, food processors had to meet legal requirements that differed between countries and consequently, companies had to manufacture several executions of pumps, valves and many other components, depending on the country of destination. Therefore, having the same guidelines and standards everywhere is of great importance to the food industry and its suppliers.

Subgroups of EHEDG develop the guidelines and because the composition of these groups is usually multinational, the language that is used is English. The resulting guidelines therefore too, are in English. One of the main reasons for regional sections is the translation of the guidelines into local languages, recognising that those who need to apply the guidelines often have not the command of English to fully understand them. In addition, there is a need for training and education in hygienic food manufacturing and in designing hygienic machinery in local languages, which is not readily available.

Half of the European population lives in the eastern part, where traditionally the command of English is less than in western Europe, for the simple reason that in the time of the Soviet Union, not English but Russian was the language of communication between countries. To make EHEDG guidelines and training material accessible to the eastern countries, in 2007 the executive committee of EHEDG decided to start activities, aimed at the creation of Regional Sections in more of the eastern countries. Another reason is that participation of eastern countries in EHEDG may offer significant benefits to EHEDG. During recent visits to food factories in eastern Europe, it became evident that the level of hygiene in many food factories in eastern Europe is at least at the same level as in western Europe and in several cases possibly even at a higher level. It certainly applies to some slaughterhouses in Serbia and a very large beer factory in Kiev. It is with great interest that I look forward to seeing more food factories in the eastern part of Europe.

Croatia

During the CEFood2008 in Cavtat, Prof. Kata Galic of the Faculty of Food Technology and Biotechnology, University in Zagreb organised a meeting to discuss the set up of an EHEDG Regional Section in Croatia, with Prof. Tomislav Petrak and Dr. Helga Medić of the Faculty of Food Technology and Biotechnology, Department of Food Processing and Engineering of the University of Zagreb and Dipl. ing. Dražen Lušić of the Department of Food Technology & Control of the University of Rijeka and President of the Croatia Association for Sanitary Engineering. That meeting resulted in the conclusion that forming a Croatia Section is desirable and the expectation is that this can be realised soon.

Companies, institutes, organisations and individual food professionals, interested in joining this activity are invited to contact:

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European Hygienic Engineering & Design Group (EHEDG)

Major tasks

EHEDG provides practical guidance on the hygienic engineering aspects of manufacturing safe and wholesome food. Founded in 1989, it is a consortium of equipment manufacturers, food companies, research and educational institutes as well as public health authorities whose common aim is to promote hygiene during the processing and packaging of food products.

The EHEDG organisation consists of the Main Group, the Executive Committee, the Subgroups and Regional Sections with their chairpersons and members.

EHEDG actively supports European legislation, which requires that handling, preparation processing and packaging of food is done hygienically using hygienic machinery and in hygienic premises (EC Directive 98/37/EC, EN 1672-2 and EN ISO 14159).

Principal goal

The principal goal of EHEDG is the promotion of safe food by improving hygienic engineering and design in all aspects of food manufacture.

The sections provide:

- dissemination of guidelines in the local language(s)
- feedback to the main group about local affairs and new developments
- advisory function to legislators and standards groups
- a networking platform for local experts in hygienic design

Conferences

The EHEDG international conference is organised every two years. It serves as a meeting place and a forum, bringing together EHEDG members with industry and government representatives, to exchange views and update each other on issues and new developments in hygienic engineering. Whenever possible, workshops are offered to complement the series of lectures.

Publications

Order information and a list of almost 40 guideline titles and summaries are available on www.ehedg.org. Also available is the EHEDG Training Facilitator produced as a reader's guide and as a tool for designing courses in hygienic engineering and design. Together with the Trainer's Toolbox, it is a valuable teaching aid

How to become an EHEDG member

Individual membership

Working party members are actively contributing to the aims of EHEDG by their knowhow and are addressing themselves to the task of developing and writing up guidelines in a team of other experts. Corresponding members receive minutes of the working group meetings and updates on the progress of their work. A member has the option to join a regional section and its activities.

The annual membership fee is EUR 100 (excl. VAT).

Other benefits

- Discount on the sales price of EHEDG guidelines (for corresponding members)
- Complimentary copies of selected guidelines (for working party members being guideline co-authors)
- Discount on other selected publications
- Discount on registration fees to conferences, seminars and training courses
- Free copy of EHEDG reports and the yearbook
- Networking with other members on issues of common interest.

Company and institute membership

Company members and institutes are essential to help EHEDG achieve its longterm goal of assisting in the prevention of food hygiene problems, through the application of hygienic engineering.

These companies and organisations are committed to the highest standards of food safety and strive to improve the overall image of the industry in the eyes of the consumer. Through the network within the EHEDG organisation, they can promote their views in as far as they support our objectives; they can influence trends and earn international recognition for their efforts.

Other benefits

- Full set of the EHEDG guidelines
- Free members (1 to 4 staff members, depending on the company's contribution)
- Use of the EHEDG member logo under agreed conditions
- Publication of the company's logo and name on the EHEDG website, in conference programs, brochures etc.
- Hyperlinks from the EHEDG website
- A discount or waiver of registration fees for EHEDG sponsored conferences
- Access to training courses
- Discounted or complimentary EHEDG training toolbox (depending on the company's contribution)

Contact

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